

The American Spanish War

Its History Written by the Men Who Participated in It.
Edited by JOHN McELROY.

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THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAINE.

What Precipitated the War—A Terrible Catastrophe Costing the Lives of Hundreds of Sailors—Findings of the Courts of Inquiry.

By GEO. F. W. HOLMAN, U. S. N.,
One of the Officers of the Maine.

THE destruction of the Maine in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, on Feb. 15, 1898, is an event occupying a middle place between the long series of incidents connected with the struggle for release from the galling rule of Spain and the beginning of the actual war in which the United States finally became involved.

Spain, having been defeated in the Cuban struggle, was forced to give up Cuba, and the United States, on the other hand, after a most thorough investigation of 23 days of patient labor by a Court of Inquiry composed of some of the most scientific men of the Navy, presided over by Capt. Sampson, who soon after became the Admiral of the United States fleet, reached the conclusion that the loss of the battleship was due, not to internal causes, but to the springing of a mine planted in close proximity to the moorings which had been placed there by the Cubans.

This finding of the Court of Inquiry of the United States was most conclusively substantiated by the condition of the wreck above and below water, and gave evidence that, although one or more magazines had exploded, throwing upward and outward heavy masses of the decks and sides of the ship, the primary cause was the explosion of a mine exploded beneath the vessel's bottom, as manifested by the principal fact that the keel had been thrown upward in an inverted V shape and broken into two with the keelson about 30 feet above its normal position; by the further principal fact that the outside bottom plating was bent inward from outward in a reversed V shape; by the still further principal fact that the outer shell of the ship, on the port forward side, had been thrown upward to a point about 34 feet above its normal position; and by many other facts impossible to have been produced save by a submarine mine.

A full report of the Court of Inquiry was transmitted to our Congress by the President of the United States in his Message of March 28, 1898.

INDIGNANT PEOPLE.

While the people of the United States were intensely inflamed by the outrage, and desired war at once, believing, with greater reason of the world, that the disaster was attributable to an outside source and not to internal accident, they nevertheless followed the counsel of their leaders and patiently awaited the result of the greater investigation ordered by the President, and when, after two months of waiting, war was finally declared, the Nation was content to accept the judgment of the President, which had been based on humanitarian principles for the liberation of an oppressed people, and cited the Maine disaster as merely an incident, one among many, that finally led to the inevitable struggle between the United States and Spain.

To go back a little, the sympathies of the people of the United States, always in favor of the Cubans against Spain, had become pronounced in the course of the debates in our Congress and in the articles of the press, that between the public of the United States and that of Spain a great animosity and a strong desire for immediate hostilities had developed, which required tactical exertions on the part of the Diplomatic Corps of both countries to keep in repression. Among other acts of conciliation adopted by our Government was the discontinuance, with regard to Cuba, of the practice in vogue among all civilized nations from times of long ago—of sending naval squadrons on unsolicited visits to the ports of foreign nations. Realizing the possibility that the appearance of one of our war vessels in a Cuban port during the period of strained relations between the United States and Spain might be regarded by the ignorant class of the latter country as a menace, and might consequently occasion a pretext for an outbreak of the unruly mob, our Government refrained from dispatching our ships of war to Cuban waters for any purpose whatever; but at a time arrived when it was believed to be advisable to act otherwise in this respect.

WHY THE MAINE WAS SENT.

In January, 1898, the relations between the Spaniards and the Cubans, on the one hand, and the aggressive Gen. Weyler, on the other, as these of the more pacific Gen. Blanco, together with the further confusion caused by the acts of the Cubans themselves represented by diverse parties and interests, led to rioting in the city of Havana on a visit of the Spanish fleet, and the Spanish, in turn, intimated their intention of returning the courtesy by sending one of their battleships on a similar visit to New York. The ship chosen by the United States for this interchange of visits was the battleship Maine. The Spaniards, on their part, selected the armored cruiser Vizcaya.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLESHIP.

The Maine, built at the New York Navy Yard, was a second-class battleship, which

day, but nothing of an unusual or threatening nature was observed at any time.

THE DISASTER.

At 9:40 p. m., on the 15th of February, 1898, nearly all the officers and crew not on duty having retired for the night, a heavy explosion, unmistakably that of a submarine mine, took place under the forward part of the ship in the neighborhood of the forward magazine. This explosion was followed by another one, almost simultaneous, evidently that of one or more of the magazines ignited by the submarine mine. The forward part of the ship was at once reduced to a mass of wreckage, the after part remaining comparatively unharmed. The ship sank at once to the bottom in six fathoms of water, the poop deck being nearly awash, until later, when the vessel sank deep in the mud.

The scene was one impossible to depict; eye-witnesses only, of the terrible calamity, could realize the horror of the situation. The placid waters of the harbor were suddenly lashed into foam in the neighborhood of the doomed ship; a heavy column of flame and smoke, dotted with innumerable fragments of the once mighty vessel, shot upward into the calm obscurity of the night; the waters around were sprinkled with the forms of men—some, through almost a miraculous escape, uninjured; others wounded; others dead, but apparently intact in person; others torn

into fragments. In the bosom of the ship, as afterwards ascertained by the divers, scores of men lay drowned in their hammocks in such a tangle that even at present it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of those who were lost. The only survivors to whom a brief interval of time, limited by minutes, had been given for an effort to reach the upper decks, were caught by the rushing waters and floating debris sweeping off, in compartments and in places remote from the hatches which they were striving to reach as the only exit from the death trap below. Among the latter were two officers, Lieut. Friend W. Jenkins and Asst. Engineer Darwin R. Merritt.

The loss of men all told, counting those who were immediately killed and those who subsequently died in their wounds, was 266, and the saved were 88.

GALLANTRY OF THE SURVIVORS.

The survivors exerted their utmost efforts in the rescue of the wounded, and in the hopeless attempt to save the ship. Capt. Sigsbee directed the operations with a cool bravery paralleled by few episodes in the world's history. He was seconded by his Executive Officer, Lieut.-Com. Wainwright—later the hero of the Gloucester at the naval battle off Santiago, and earnestly aided by all the others. First Lieutenant of the ship was Lieut. Com. Wainwright, who was in the upper part of the wreck forward; ammunition stored in emergency magazines in different parts of the ship were exploded at frequent intervals. Only two boats were available for the work of rescue. Under Capt. Sigsbee's direction, some officers were sent to the neighborhood of the fire to express it if possible; other officers and men were detailed to the boats with orders to rescue the men in the water. All proceedings were initiated and executed with the greatest coolness and an ordinary daily drill, manifesting a state of discipline of which the Navy and the Nation may be forever proud.

It was believed by many on board, if not by all, that the explosion was the beginning of an attack by the Spaniards. In pursuance of this belief, orders were given to procure arms, which, however, were unobtainable, the ship having sunk so quickly that all armories and racks for arms were at once submerged. The survivors found themselves a defenseless group gathered together on the poop, the only remaining dry and intact part of the ship at the time—some clad in the uniform of the day; others partly robed; still others only in their night clothing. To wit: the disaster had been averted, but it soon became evident that a continuation of the attack was not contemplated, but that all in the vicinity were leading their life to the rescue of the few who were left.

HAVANA ABANDONED.

The noise of the explosion had aroused not only the harbor, but the entire city, and even the outlying suburbs. In the immediate neighborhood of the Maine was the Spanish cruiser Alfonso XII and the Ward Line steamer City of Washington. The greatest activity was displayed by these vessels in sending boats to the scene of the disaster, and notable credit is due to the officers and crew of the City of Washington for bravery evinced on their part. Certain small row-boats plying a passenger trade in the harbor also contributed to the work of rescue. In a short time all of the men afloat were taken out of the water and taken—some to the Alfonso XII, others to the City of Washington, and others to the hospitals on shore receiving every proper attention from the Surgeons. Capt. Sigsbee, remaining on board the wreck, dispatched officers in all possible directions to make a muster of the saved, and not until this had been done, and it had long since become evident that no more could be accomplished for his ship and that no further advantage was to be gained by exposing his own life and the lives of those whom he retained on board as assistants, did he finally give the order to abandon the wreck. He himself was the last to leave, stepping from the now all but submerged poop deck into his gig with the deliberate calm dignity befitting a Captain, who, with his ship sunk under him, was nevertheless

NOT VANQUISHED IN SPIRIT.

Capt. Sigsbee, with his officers, went on board the Ward Line steamer City of

Washington for the night. The following day, at 11 o'clock, the ship was hoisted by cable to the pier, and all of the officers and men whom it was not necessary to retain in Havana in the interests of the Maine, were sent by steamer to Key West, Fla. Capt. Sigsbee, with a small staff of officers retained to assist him, occupied quarters at hotels in the city. The badly wounded were transferred from the Alfonso XII and the City of Washington to hospitals on shore.

Work was at once begun in various lines: that of recovering the bodies of the dead; that of making preliminary investigations of the disaster; that of recovering from the wreck such articles of the equipment of the ship as were still above the water line or accessible to divers. This property was put on board the U. S. Dispatch Steamer Fern and the U. S. Light House Tender Mangrove, which arrived in port from Key West the day following the explosion in answer to a request by cable from Capt. Sigsbee. The Spanish officials expressed profound sympathy for the occurrence, and disclaimed any Government knowledge of its cause. On the afternoon of Feb. 17, the state of discipline on board the U. S. Light House Tender Mangrove was such that the Spaniards, in the imposing processions, civic, naval, and military, that had been witnessed in Havana for a long period of years. Every effort was made by the Spaniards to express sympathy on a magnificent scale.

On the 21st of February, a COURT OF INQUIRY, ordered by Rear-Admiral Montgomery Seward, U. S. Navy, Commander-in-Chief of the United States force on the North Atlantic Station, convened on board the U. S. Light House Tender Mangrove in the harbor of Havana. The Court was composed of Capt. William T. Sampson, President; Capt. French E. Chadwick and Lieut.-Com. John A. Maffett, Members; and Lieut.-Com. Adolph Maris, Judge-Advocate. The Court made a most patient, thorough and searching investigation into all matters pertaining to the destruction of the Maine, including the wreck in detail, above and below the water line, with the assistance of expert Naval Constructors and divers, and examining all witnesses whose testimony promised to throw light, in the faintest degree, on the subject. Eighteen days of this investigation were held on board the U. S. Light House Tender Mangrove in the harbor of Havana, and five days on board the U. S. Battleship Iowa of Key West, Fla.

The primary object of a naval court of inquiry, in the case of a change to naval property, is to determine whether or not blame for the disaster should attach to any officer in whose charge this property may be.

THE FINDING OF THE COURT.

In the case of the Maine is of historic interest. The official report reads as follows: "After full and mature consideration of all the testimony before it, the Court finds as follows: 1. That the United States Battleship Maine arrived in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, on the 25th day of January, 1898, and was taken to buoy No. 5, in from five and a half to six fathoms of water, by the regular Government pilot."

"The United States Naval General at that place, the previous evening, of the intended arrival of the Maine."

"The state of discipline on board the Maine was excellent, and all orders and regulations in regard to the care and safety of the ship were strictly carried out. All ammunition was stowed in accordance with prescribed instructions, and proper care was taken whenever ammunition was handled."

"Nothing was stowed in any one of the magazines or shell rooms which was not permitted to be stowed there."

"The magazines and shell rooms were always locked after having been opened, and after the destruction of the Maine the keys were found in the proper place in the Captain's cabin, everything having been reported secure that evening at 8 p. m."

"The temperatures of the magazines and shell rooms were taken daily and reported. The only magazine which had an undue amount of heat was the after magazine, and that did not explode at the time the Maine was destroyed."

"The torpedoes were all stowed in the after part of the ship, under the ward room, and the cause of the explosion was not determined by the Court."

"The dry gun-cotton primers and detonators were stowed in the cabin aft, and remote from the scene of the explosion."

"Waste was carefully looked after on board the Maine to obviate danger. Special orders in regard to this had been given by the Captain, and that did not explode at the time the Maine was destroyed."

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What is My Chance of Winning Ten Thousand Dollars?

THIS is the question that a reader who is interested in the guessing contest naturally asks himself about this time. Maybe the following will help him to an answer:

First, it should be borne in mind that our guessing contests are not large; that is, not large in respect of the number who make guesses. In one of our contests there were only 623 contestants. In the most popular of the 14 contests we have had, a contest held during the holiday season, the number of contestants did not exceed 2,500. These contests of ours with a limited number of contestants, are very much more favorable for winning than the large election contests in which hundreds of thousands of contestants engage. The less the number of contestants the better the chances of winning.

Is it surprising that so few enter the contests? Not very. At least half our readers are past the age of enterprise and activity. Others have conscientious scruples, not well founded, as we believe, against entering any kind of contest. Still others, the suspicious kind of folks, probably think the contests are not fairly conducted. This brings the number of contestants down to the comparatively few alert, enterprising, fair-minded readers who do not let chances like this pass unimproved.

Now, the comparatively few who do enter the contests must be divided into two groups: First, those who make but few guesses, and second, those who make a good many. The first group is very much the larger. Most contestants seem to have the mistaken idea that a few guesses afford about as good chances as many. It's a great mistake. If the contest is worth entering at all, the contestant should take more chances. Fifty, a hundred, or two hundred guesses indicate just that many more chances of winning a big prize.

This brings us pretty close to the answer of the question at the head of these columns. While the contestant who makes but one guess may win the ten thousand dollar prize, the law of chances is two hundred times more likely to award that little fortune to the contestant who makes 200 guesses.

How many contestants will make 200 guesses? Not one, so far, has made a deal large enough to entitle him to 200 guesses. How many, if any, there will be we cannot tell, but judging from past contests we estimate the number at five.

Now, we have as fair an answer as can be made to the question: The chances are that the ten thousand dollar prize will fall among about five contestants, each of whom make

the Proposition.

Guess the receipts of the U. S. Treasury for Monday, May 18, 1903. Guesses must arrive in our hands at Washington, D. C., on or before May 17, 1903. The odd cents of the receipts need not be guessed at.

The first prize will be won by the nearest guess. The second prize and up to the 1,000th by the next nearest guesses in the order named.

The Prizes.

1st prize, cash \$10,000
2d prize, cash 1,000
3d prize, cash 500
4th prize, cash 400
5th prize, cash 300
6th prize, cash 200
7th prize, cash 100
8th prize, cash 100
9th prize, cash 100
10th prize, cash 100
11th to 50th prize, cash, each \$50 2,000
51st to 1,000th prize, each \$20 worth of books, as per list printed elsewhere. If preferred, the value in subscriptions or advertising may be taken in place of books 19,000
\$33,800

All prizes paid within two weeks after announcement of the awards. No claim for an award considered after the awards have been paid. If more than one guess makes the same winning, the prize will be divided.

How Guesses Are Secured.

Every dollar paid The National Tribune during the term of this Contest (from Jan. 1 to May 17, 1903) secures one guess, whether the money be paid for advertising, subscriptions, or books. A subscription agent may have one guess for each dollar paid and allow one guess to each \$1 subscriber. An advertising agent may have one guess for each dollar paid and allow the advertisers, whose bills he settles, one guess for each \$1 of their bills.

How and When to Make Guesses.

Guesses can be sent when payments are made, or later, only being sure to send them so they will arrive in our hands by May 17. We will keep accurate accounts with each person paying money during this Contest. No guesses will be allowed in excess of the allowance of one guess for each \$1.00, except as noted above.

Make each guess on a separate piece of paper about the size of a postal card. Use only one side of the paper, and sign name and address under each guess.

If ten or more guesses are made they may all be written on one page letter or foolscap size, signing name and address at bottom. Use more than one page if necessary.

(Continued on seventh page.)

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(Continued on seventh page.)

(ONE-DOLLAR COUPON.) (Date of issue.)

Good for one year's subscription to The National Tribune. Or, good for \$1 worth of National Tribune Books. Or, good for \$1 worth of National Tribune Advertising.



The National Tribune Co.

[This is a sample only, and is not good for subscription, book or "ad."] Name _____

Transferable. Valid during the year 1903. P. O. _____, State _____

President's books next year, when he is a candidate for reelection. We will not be surprised if the volumes we are now closing out at 50c will bring \$2 a volume next year.

(From Associated Press Dispatches.)
POPE PLEASED WITH GIFT.
HE WILL SEND PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER.

Rome, April 17.—The Pope was gratified when informed that President Roosevelt on the celebration of the Papal jubilee had forwarded to the Pontiff, through Cardinal Gibbons, the volumes containing all the messages and official documents of the Presidents of the United States.

He said: "The messages are the essence of a century and a half of American political wisdom. I shall be happy in having it as a companion to the set of President Roosevelt's own library works, sent by Gov. Taft last year."

The Pontiff added that he will thank the President by sending him an autograph letter.

The President's books referred to above are identical, we believe, with those we supply. Our book "Official History of the United States," described on another page, is a one-volume edition of the "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," with which the Pope was so much gratified.

Sharing Profits